

MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM

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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)
(Formerly Bureau of Health)
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****ADVISORY – Important Information****

2006 PHADV005

TO: Border Medical Officers; Emergency Departments; Emergency Medical Services; Hospital Educators; Infection Control Practitioners; ME Correctional Facilities; ME Lab Facilities; ME Primary Care; Public Health Nurses; School Nurses

FROM: Dora Anne Mills, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Director

SUBJECT: Widespread Influenza Activity

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Widespread Influenza Activity – Maine, April 5, 2006

Several indicators in Maine's influenza surveillance system are showing significant "late season" influenza A and influenza B activity. Health care providers should be aware of the continued circulation of influenza A and B when evaluating persons with influenza-like illnesses (ILI) and for management of persons with ILI symptoms in triage areas and clinic waiting rooms.

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Background: After an initial peak in activity in late-December, Maine's influenza sentinel surveillance providers reported an increasing number of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness during the past 3 weeks. Laboratory surveillance data from the state laboratory and two reference laboratories indicate an increasing number of specimens submitted for influenza testing and number of specimens positive for influenza A and B. During the past 3 weeks, over 20 outbreaks of influenza have been reported in long-term and acute care facilities and schools.

Recommendations: Suspected outbreaks of influenza or influenza-like illness should be reported by calling 1-800-821-5821. Collecting respiratory specimens to confirm influenza infection is encouraged. For additional influenza information and resources, including on use of antiviral drugs and outbreak control guidelines, please see the CDC web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>. Amantadine and rimantadine should not be used for the treatment or prophylaxis of influenza A in the United States for the remainder of the 2005-06 influenza season, because viruses currently circulating show resistance to these medications.

For more information: Information on influenza activity locally can be found on Maine's influenza surveillance web site:
http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/influenza_surveillance_weekly_updates.htm